



June 3, 2020

House Committee on Finance
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Eleanor Slater Hospital

Dear Honorable Members of the House Committee on Finance:

The Mental Health Recovery Coalition thanks you for taking up the issue of the Eleanor Slater Hospital, a vitally important facility for vulnerable Rhode Islanders. We respectfully urge you to invest in improving and expanding funding for it.

Despite advances in treatment and science, some people with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI) need long term care that can best be provided in a setting such as Eleanor Slater Hospital, where they can receive constant care and supervision. Furthermore, traditional nursing homes and assisted living homes are usually not appropriate or safe placements for aging patients with these kinds of brain conditions. Rhode Islanders need more options.

When we neglect to provide housing and hospitalization options for people with SPMI, they are left to repeatedly cycle between homeless shelters, emergency room departments, and the Adult Correctional Institute. It is not humane (or cost effective) to send Rhode Island's most vulnerable citizens to homeless shelters and prisons. This is not what any of us would want for our family members.

We support the governor's budget request for funds to improve facilities and structures at Eleanor Slater Hospital, and we encourage this Committee to budget for competitive wages for staff, much needed facility improvements, and additional beds to meet the demand. Now is the time for Rhode Island to invest in safe and stable housing and hospitalization options for people

with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI). We respectfully urge you to take a first step in protecting this population. Please, be their voice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Laurie-Marie Pisciotta
Executive Director
Mental Health Association of Rhode Island
345 Blackstone Blvd., Sawyer Bldg., Room 310
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 215-4471
laurie.pisciotta@mhari.org
www.mhari.org

Charles Feldman, CPRS
Chair, Mental Health Recovery Coalition of RI (MHRC-RI)
401-261-5294
cfeldmanri@gmail.com

Beth Lamarre
Executive Director
NAMI Rhode Island
154 Waterman Street, Suite 5B
Providence, Rhode Island 02906
(401) 331-3060
beth@namirhodeisland.org
www.namirhodeisland.org

James McNulty
Executive Director
Oasis Wellness & Recovery Centers
134 Mathewson St., Suite B-5
Providence, RI 02903
Cell: 401-965-8450
Jmcnultyri@Gmail.com